

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry,

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1791.

OF THE TWO VOLUMES OF THE HISTORY OF THE

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD-MAYOR,

AND THE WORSHIPFUL THE COURT OF ALDERMEN,

On the 29th of SEPTEMBER, 1791,

Previous to the Election of a CHIEF MAGISTRATE for this City,

BY THE

Rev^d. JOSIAH DISTURNELL, M.A. 11

CHAPLAIN TO HIS LORDSHIP.

L O N D O N:

Printed, at the particular Request of the LORD-MAYOR and COURT
of ALDERMEN,

By H. REYNELL, No. 21, Piccadilly, near the Hay-Market.

M.DCC.XCI.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

Faith Church of St. Lawrence (London)

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR

AND THE WORSHIPFUL THE COURT OF ALDERMEN

On the 29th of SEPTEMBER, 1897

By the Rev. J. J. DISTURNELL, M.A.

BY THE

Rev. JOSIAH DISTURNELL, M.A.

CHAPLAIN TO HIS LORDSHIP

Printed at the Stationer's Office of the LORD-MAYOR and COURT
of ALDERMEN

By H. KENNELL, No. 21, Piccadilly, near the Hay-Market

1897

Right Honourable JOHN BOYDELL,
LORD-MAYOR.
BOYDELL, MAYOR.

*Tuesday the 18th day of October,
1791, and in the 31st Year of
the Reign of King George the
Third, of Great-Britain, &c.*

IT IS ORDERED, that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Rev. Mr. DISTURNELL, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the LORD-MAYOR, for his Sermon preached before this Court and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry, on Thursday the twenty-ninth of September last, before the Election of a LORD-MAYOR of this City, for the year ensuing; and that he be desired to print the same.

R I X.

BOYDELL, Mayor. }
 the King of King George the
 third, of Great-Britain, &c.

IT IS ORDERED, that the Thanks of this Court be
 given to the Rev. Mr. DISTURFIELD, Chaplain to the Right
 Honourable the Lord-Mayor, for his Sermon preached before
 this Court and the Aldermen of the several Companies of this
 City, at the Parish Church of St. Andrew's, on Thursday
 the twenty-ninth of September last, before the Election of a
 Lord-Mayor of this City, for the year ensuing; and that he
 be desired to print the same.

R. I. X.

TO THE
Right Honourable JOHN BOYDELL,
L O R D - M A Y O R,

AND THE
WORSHIPFUL THE COURT OF ALDERMEN,

T H I S S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE THEM IN THE

Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry,

O N

The 29th of S E P T E M B E R, 1791,

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR DEVOTED AND
OBEDIENT SERVANT,

*London, October 20th,
1791.*

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE
Right Honourable JOHN BOYDELL
LORD MAYOR

AND THE
WORSHIPFUL THE COURT OF ALDERMEN

THIS
SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THEM IN THE

Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry

ON

The 24th of SEPTEMBER, 1790

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR DEVOTED AND
OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR

JOB, CHAP. XXIX. VERSE 14.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me ; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

THERE is no expedient better calculated to assist men in the pursuit of virtue and holiness, or indeed in the whole conduct of life, than by recurring to the wisdom of former ages, to observe the rules and methods by which men of tried and approved righteousness, who are set forth to us in holy writ as patterns and examples, have attained to that perfection which rendered them the *Lights* of the world, and in declared favor with their MAKER. By contemplating such eminent characters we may easily deduce inferences applicable to our own situation, confident, at the same time, that the rules which we prescribe for ourselves are at once proper and

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practicable ;

practicable ; practicable, because drawn from the practice of men like ourselves ; and proper, because the experience of good men hath already proved them to be so, in the attainment of that very end which is the object of our own pursuit.

With this view the Book of JOB, which is one of the most ancient and most magnificent pieces of eastern poetry, challenges our serious attention and regard. The principal design of which is to teach men that, considering the corruption, ignorance, and weakness of human nature, on the one hand, and the infinite wisdom and power of God, on the other, they should renounce all vain confidence in their own strength, put their full trust in the equity of his decrees, and repose, for consolation, in the final proportions of eternal justice.

It hath pleased the good Providence of God, for wise reasons, in the government of the world, to permit a sad variety of wretchedness to prevail in it : but there is no species of affliction under which the sufferer, by referring to this celebrated History, may not be taught submission, and acquire relief. It was the lot of the PATRIARCH, with a character *perfect* and *upright*, and in full possession of those several particulars which usually constitute human felicity, to experience distress in its most complicated form :

form: and as we are thereby instructed in the instability of all human greatness, so are we admonished by his subsequent conduct, when struggling with the misfortunes of life, to seek refuge in the emulation of his fortitude and dignity. In the midst of his embarrassments it is observable that he neither suffered his afflictions to disarm him of his integrity, nor to bereave him of his faith. It is recorded of him that he still preserved his soul in patience; acknowledging the justice of God in all his dispensations, *of evil as well as good*; and trusting, with pious confidence, that *his latter end* would be, as in reality it was, *more blessed than his beginning*.

But the instruction, to be drawn from the history of JOB, is not confined to the *private* virtues of the Patriarch. The words of the Text have an immediate reference to his public conduct, as an Elder, or a Magistrate: and at a time when we are assembled for the solemn purpose of recalling to our minds the invaluable blessing of civil government, in the appointment of such Ministers of justice, it will be found peculiarly adapted to answer the end proposed by this solemnity, to make the *public* character of JOB the particular object of our contemplation. "I
 " put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was
 " as a robe and a diadem."

It appears, from several passages in this history of the PATRIARCH, that he had not only been a person of great opulence, but also of great authority; and from the reflection which he here makes, as it stands connected with that description of him, there is little question but that, in the exercise of his authority, he had ever been mindful of the great and important end for which power was originally delegated. We have, in the old Testament, the history of the Jewish polity from its first and fundamental establishment; so that we may know, with facility, not only the manner in which the supreme and subordinate Magistrates succeeded in after-times, but also how they were constituted at the beginning, and the purpose for which they were appointed.

The Jews, at their coming out of Egypt, prior to their settlement in Canaan, had no other Governor than Moses; and from him, their supreme, originated the subordinate branches of magistracy. In the midst of a numerous people, where much was to be reformed, and where a disposition prevailed, for the most part turbulent and unfriendly to such reform, the Office of Ruler and Judge, whilst it remained solely with Moses, would naturally be rendered arduous and inadequate. Jethro, the Father-in-law of Moses, observing how materially this con-

sideration

sideration would affect the grand purpose of his Commission, counselled him, for the better execution of the law, to delegate a part of his authority ; to select, from the several tribes, such persons as were best qualified to give it efficacy. " Harken
 " unto my voice, and I will give thee counsel ;" with respect to religious duties, " Thou shalt shew them the way wherein they
 " must walk, and the work they must do ;" but in regard to civil matters, " thou shalt provide able men, such as fear God,
 " men of truth, hating covetousness." This counsel of the Priest of Midian we find confirmed by a similar direction from God himself. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto
 " me seventy men of the Elders of Israel, and I will take of
 " the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them ;
 " and they shall bear the burthen of the people with thee, that
 " thou bear it not thyself alone." In the succeeding days of Jehoshaphat the mode of procedure, respecting the appointment of civil Governors, was regulated upon the same principles.
 " He set Judges in the Land thro-ought all the fenced cities of
 " Judah." Each city had a chief Magistrate of its own ; and the principal charge of their commission was, in their respective departments, to " govern the people righteously." Such indeed, from the conviction that no state can long subsist without some subordination, has been the uniform practice of all nations : and
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it was with a view to the necessity of such legal appointments that the Apostle thus emphatically enjoined the first Christians to receive all such distinctions with reverence. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto Magistrates, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise and protection of them that do well."

To preserve a sense of Religion amongst men, and to assist in directing depraved nature to a right end, has, from the remotest antiquity, formed the fundamental principle in the great duties of magistracy. When the Lord made choice of Abraham, and placed him at the head of a great and powerful nation, it was because he foresaw that the Patriarch would rule and govern with a primary regard to the ordinances of God. "I know that he will command the people, under his authority, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment:" and when JOB, upon review of his public character, exults that he had "put on righteousness," the account, recorded of his piety, warrants the conclusion that he had been no less jealous for the honour of God, than vigilant in maintaining the just rights of mankind.

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Indeed the care of Religion is every way the concernment of the magistrate, and his judgment then, more peculiarly, as a robe and a diadem, when extended to the advancement of it : as the minister of God, it is one of his first requisites that he rule in the fear of God ; co-operating, as it were, with him in the government of the universe. But by what expedient can he better facilitate this momentous part of duty, than by resolutely enforcing the laws against irreligion and immorality ; thus warning the licentious and profane that the ordinances of God are too sacred to be trifled with, or mocked with impunity ? All authority is subservient to the interests of Religion ; and the consciousness of a power to advance those interests is attended with a proportionate obligation to exert it.

Even with a view to *temporal felicity*, it is of importance to keep alive, in the minds of the people, a due sense of Religion. For what can so highly promote, or so strongly defend, the welfare of society, in all its branches, as an institution which is of divine original ; and which is, in itself, first pure, and then peaceable ; the basis upon which civilization is established, and the source from whence proceed all the elegancies and comforts of that civilization ? Neither is Religion less entitled to the support of the magistrate from *private considerations* : for when
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men abate of their reverence and esteem for the laws of their Maker, it is an easy transition to the contemptuous disregard of those whom his Providence hath set over them.

From the increasing populousness of this city, and from the rapid growth of crimes, in consequence, it should seem to demand more than ordinary attention to this interesting act of duty; that the poison of infidelity spread not to the ruin of religious and moral obligations. The progress of iniquity is always gradual, leading, as it were imperceptibly, if not checked in its career, to a total depravity of manners; and we know, from the melancholy experience of men, whose attainments and whose native vigor of mind set them far above vulgar prejudice, that, when a reverence for Religion is once lost, and when numbers are involved in the like influence of sentiment and conduct, the period of danger to the common good is seldom far distant. "As righteousness exalteth a nation, so is wickedness
" always a reproach, *and in the end destruction*, to any people."

The next prominent feature, in the *public* character of JOB, which rendered his judgment as a robe and a diadem, was his reverential regard to the impartial administration of justice. "I
" put on righteousness, and it clothed me." The external marks
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of distinction with which magistracy, in all ages, hath been wisely invested, are never more illustrious than when they receive their colouring from a just and righteous judgment. So natural indeed is the union between Religion and Justice, that we shall rarely find any fixed and permanent principles of either, where both are not held in equal veneration: for, with interests, passions, and prejudices, prone to misrepresent and mislead, what can men oppose to this corrupt influence, for the ample security of justice; but the persuasion that *God is with them in the judgment?* Or how can they evince the sincerity of such persuasion, and manifest their regard for Religion, but by the undeviating justice of their actions? If they, whose more immediate province it is to dispense equity, are not impressed with a proper notion of the all-seeing Eye of that stupendous Being whose vice-gerents they are, the formalities of justice serve only to confound the distinction between right and wrong; and that, which was originally ordained for the common good, would unhappily become the cause of common misery.

Independent of the command which says, "Thou shalt not respect persons in judgment," equal justice is the great standing policy of civil society. Every man reposes upon the tribunals of his country, the stability of possession, and the

serenity of life ; nor is it easy to reconcile a partial observance of the laws with that wisdom and equity which first devised them. Any eminent departure therefore from that line of rectitude which the law has marked out, not only diminishes the public confidence in the laws themselves, but shakes the foundation of public tranquility.

The judgment of the magistrate reflects lustre also on the dignity of his function, when, in imitation of the PATRIARCH, he appropriates his power to the protection of the helpless, and to the relief of the indigent. "I was eyes to the blind, and "feet was I to the lame." Perfect benevolence is the produce of perfect wisdom, and can therefore exist in God alone : but as this is an attribute of the Deity in which we are most nearly interested, in the ordinary course of his Providence, so are we employed most suitably to the divine will, and most conformably to the commands of our Religion, when, in proportion to our several abilities, we make that attribute a part of our own character. In the possession of power is lodged much of the ability to do good ; and, in the estimate of true wisdom, this privilege will be found one of its most valued appendages. That he had been "a father to the poor, and a deliverer of "those who had none to help them," was the distinguishing character

character of JOB in the plenitude of *his power*. How far this species of benevolence is connected with the office of magistracy, especially in a Metropolis where the sources of human wretchedness are many and complicated, needs but little argument to demonstrate: for, as indigence and distress do not invariably include dishonesty, or substantiate guilt, and as sufferers of this description have not always, within themselves, the means of combating the calamities they sustain, there must necessarily arise, in the course of justice, ample occasions for commiseration and relief. In most cases, a remedy, for the evil complained of, will be found in the humane spirit of those laws which relate to the provision of the poor: but there is a pleasure, and indeed a virtue, in doing something more than is required by law: and it is the peculiar prerogative of those who have the power of discrimination in their hands, that, whilst they apply the sword of Justice to the punishment of profligacy and vice, they are enabled, many times, to step forth in defence of injured innocence, and to pay that tribute to the wants of their inferiors by selection, which, from the nature of the case, it is perhaps impossible for the law to provide.

Amongst the several appeals which present themselves, in the administration of public justice, many are so fraught with

intricacy and disguise, that it becomes difficult even for the utmost penetration to unravel them, or for the purest integrity to “minister true judgment to the people:” many also, though originating from causes the most frivolous, are of a complexion strongly indicative of revenge; and, unless opportunely adjusted by some well directed counsel, may lay the foundation for implacable animosity, if not for some more serious interruption to the public peace. The magistrate will therefore further heighten and adorn his judgment by a dispassionate, and an attentive investigation of the truth: thus incorporating, into his character, another eminent particular which gave lustre to the judgment of Job; “The cause which I knew not, I “searched out.” For the detection of those dark frauds which would confound the distinction between right and wrong, between innocence and guilt, the attention, in many instances, cannot be too patient, or too minute. It is this reflective habit which leads to a comprehensive, and an enlarged mind; it is this mode of procedure *which availeth much* in detecting the latent iniquity so injurious to society, so prejudicial to the interests of Religion: and as the magistrate, when accustomed calmly to deliberate, will be enabled, the more effectually, to *shorten the triumphing of the wicked*, by a full disclosure of their guilt, so will he, not unfrequently, contribute by a conciliatory interposition

position of his authority, to correct those smaller evils which mar the comforts of private life.

Such are the important particulars which constitute true righteousness, and render the judgment of the magistrate no less ornamental, than salutary; no less honourable to himself, than serviceable to the Community, and in close conformity to the christian system. His encouragement of Religion proclaims an attachment to the cause of God; in his impartial distribution of justice, we may trace, as the grand principle of action, a prevailing conviction, that *the Lord is with him in the judgment*; and by his readiness to relieve, added to an earnest solicitude for the prevention of wretchedness, he not only supports the real dignity of his moral character, but also fulfills the gracious designs of his supreme and moral Governor.

In delineating the portrait of the Magistrate, we have exhibited to us a picture, which, we trust, will be viewed with particular complacency, when assured that it is a copy from *real life*. In the *public* character of your present chief Magistrate we have seen it experimentally illustrated; we have seen a fair example of those several qualities which more eminently dignify the office of magistracy, and enlarge its utility. Were these the only considerations,

considerations, though they will apply with equal emphasis to many excellent magistrates who have already preceded him, though, we are confident, many, who may follow, will derive no less lustre from them, still would they entitle the venerable Character, who is the immediate object of contemplation, to a large portion of applause from his Fellow-citizens.

But independent of the justice, charity, clemency, and all the milder virtues of humanity, which, to the peculiar gratification of the feeling mind, have, each in their turns, displayed their excellence, and, in their exercise, have been thus beneficial to the public, there is a tribute, most justly due for services, in which he stands unrivalled, and alone; services, which, tho' not immediately connected with the office he fills, deserve much from the Metropolis over which he presides. It will not be denied, that, next to the virtue of its inhabitants, this City owes, in great measure, its opulence and prosperity to the extension of its Commerce: no speculation therefore can be foreign to its regard, which, whilst it has an honest tendency to enlarge that Commerce, at the same time, gives expansion to Genius, enriches the ingenuity which might otherwise have starved, and brings an accession of national honor. Every man, who has the prosperity, and the honor of his country at heart, will

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admire the generous ardor which impells to so noble a concern ; every man, not insensible to great exertions, or to superior excellence, will applaud the unbounded liberality which is so cheerfully diffused for the attainment of its *perfection*.

Honourable, however, as may be the possession of applause from without, the best reward of public duty, and of public service, will be found in the approbation of his own heart : this will accompany him in his retirement ; and enable him, at the close of life, to look back, with comfort and religious hope, on those days chiefly, when, by living thus essentially to his Fellow-citizens, he, for his own part, so completely verified the great apostolic maxim ; *No man liveth to himself*.

It remains only to express our most fervent wishes, under Providence, that, at some far distant period, those hopes may receive their full completion ; and that, whilst his praise is amongst men, his reward may be in Heaven.

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Honourable, however, as may be the possession of applause from without, the best reward of public duty, and of public service, will be found in the approbation of his own heart ; this will accompany him in his retirement ; and enable him, at the close of life, to look back, with comfort and religious hope, on those days chiefly, when, by living thus essentially to his fellow-citizens, he, for his own part, so completely verified the great apostolic maxim : *the more ye shall love*.

It remains only to express our most fervent wishes, under Providence, that, at some far distant period, those hopes may receive their full completion ; and that, whilst his praise is amongst men, his reward may be in Heaven.

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